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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR P, T, ISN, NEA, AND EUR/CE (Y.SAINST-ANDRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2024

TAGS: PARM KNNP MNUC PREL IR SZ

SUBJECT: IRAN: SWISS DEPUTY FM ADVOCATES BILATERAL TRACK  
TO REINFORCE P5-PLUS-1 APPROACH

REF: A. STATE 95073

¶B. BERN 363

Classified By: Ambassador Donald S. Beyer; reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Ambassador conveyed the message in reftel A in a September 14 meeting with Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) State Secretary (Deputy FM) Michael Ambuehl. Referring to news reports that the P5-plus-1 planned to meet with Iranian representatives on October 1, Ambuehl termed the P5-plus-1 "very important." He confirmed that Switzerland would continue to use both public and private opportunities to call on Iran to meet its international obligations and to take advantage of the P5-plus-1 offer. Notwithstanding the importance of the P5-plus-1 approach, and echoing comments we heard recently (reftel B) from Swiss Ambassador to Tehran Livia Leu, Ambuehl went on to emphasize that a U.S. approach to Iran on a bilateral track -- discussing discrete topics (e.g., civil aviation issues) -- still appeared indispensable to a successful outcome with Iran.

¶2. (S) Ambuehl commented that the inherently difficult multilateral coordination required for the P5-plus-1 to formulate its positions gave the Iranians a certain negotiating advantage. He also reiterated the oft-heard Swiss view that the Iranian government is most interested in dealing with the USG, not the P5-plus-1. Ambuehl further suggested that an additional, simultaneous multilateral track approach can be used to discuss such topics as Afghanistan with Iran, in broad gauged settings, such as international conferences. He suggested that the various potential tracks -- particularly the bilateral -- would be mutually reinforcing in dealing with Iran.

BEYER